

OLD-TIME CHRISTMAS CHEER

Day Marked by No Special Events, but Celebrated in the Homes.

BRINGS EXCESSIVE LABORS TO SOME

People Who Minister to Wants Peculiar to Holiday Occasions Have No Time for Holiday Dinners for Poor.

It was really an old-fashioned Christmas day that was enjoyed in Omaha yesterday. Although when the chimes from half a dozen steeples announced the advent of the day the skies were cloudless and the stars were shining brightly through the frosty air, the morning found a mantle of gray clouds spread across the heavens and the snowflakes falling gently to the whitened earth. The sun was visible throughout the day, but it gave no warmth, and its rays were not powerful enough, even in the most sheltered places, to melt the downy crystals that continued to drift slowly to earth from the time when the morning broke over the eastern hills until the shadows of twilight fell again and brought the day's festivities to an end.

What was missed by reason of the absence of the sun—if indeed anything was missed—was more than compensated for by the Christmas cheer with which the festival day was celebrated. Everywhere throughout the city the hearts of men were opened, and there were few if any who had not reason to feel that night that the Christmas season is indeed the happiest of the year. It was a day of gladness for everyone. Santa Claus had experienced a prosperous year and right generously did he bestow his largesse. Not a single chimney in town was left unvisited, and every stocking found at its base was filled before he clambered to the roof again and whistled to his reindeers to be off.

The little ones in the homes of rich and poor alike fared royally. The patron saint of the little folks was burdened down with gifts that are dear to the childish heart and no one was forgotten. There were toys for the very little men and women, skates and sleds for the boys, dolls and tea sets for the girls, warm fur coats, mittens, overcoats and the hundreds of other trinkets that the little folks have come to expect at this season of the year and that are so very dear to them. The larger children fared equally well and the smiling faces that looked out from the holly wreaths in the windows or encountered on the streets told of enjoyment and sweet content with what the day had brought.

Some Tired Workers.

Although there was a general cessation of labor in the stores and shops, there were some tired people who at night came. At the headquarters of the organized charities there was a busy activity from early in the morning until after the noon hour had passed. Dinners were provided at several hotels and in private homes and the stranger and indigent families to the number of several hundred were given dinners that they will not soon forget. The Salvation Army alone distributed material for Christmas dinners to over 800 people and the Christmas gifts were piled up in doors to nearly a ton, for whom it had prepared a generous spread. Private charity, though it worked unostentatiously and in secret, was active and scores of families who might otherwise have fared poorly were given a feast worthy of the day. Never before in the city of Omaha have the almsmen been so numerous and their gifts so prodigious. Presents of turkeys had been made in a number of instances by heads of firms to their employees and tons of the great American fowls were roasted and eaten, along with the inevitable cranberry sauce and the concomitant "fixins," during the course of the day. It is safe to assert that no one in the entire city went to bed supperless last night.

The hotels gave prominence to the day by extra preparation for the entertainment of their guests and at every one of the hostesses in the city the menus offered were elaborate and especially tempting. Although the average traveling man makes it a point to be at home on this day, the various caravansaries were well filled and not a few of the residents of the city dropped in to partake of the dinner that had been prepared for the delectation of the guests.

In the afternoon throngs of pleasure seekers found their way to the theaters, special matinees being given at all the houses. The audiences were big, and at three of the theaters and the performances were greatly enjoyed.

About the only religious services held in the city were those at the Catholic churches, where masses were said at frequent intervals throughout the day and especially elaborate musical programs given. In the evening social functions were given by the Thurston Rifles, the Winter club and other local organizations and the Christmas of 1900 closed with a waltz in the history before the night's program of dance music ceased to lighten the hearts of the merry-makers.

MILITARY BALL AT ARMOY

Annual Dance Given by Thurston Rifles One of the Most Brilliant Events of the Season.

The Thursday Rifles' club gave its annual Christmas ball in the armory last night with an attendance of more than 200 dancers. The reception committee had been at special pains to arrange an affair that would be among the most enjoyable of the holiday season and surpasses in many respects the holiday balls of years past, and if the crowd, the superb music, pretty gowns, handsome uniforms and other details that go to make a swell ball be taken as a criterion, success followed in its entirety. There was a crush of guests in the drawing rooms long before the music for the first dance was heard. This was at 9 o'clock. The wait was passed in chats about the delightful happenings of Christmas day and the usual ball room badinage. There were unusually pretty decorations of holly, mistletoe and greens in every nook and corner. Handsome designs appropriate for the army dotted the walls and the windows were adorned with the "wreaths." In the ballroom where the dancing was the same idea of decoration was carried out.

A string orchestra of five pieces furnished the music for seventeen engagements and nearly as many extras. There were neither dances nor music that was not up to date and not less than 100 couples waltzed and schottisched to the strains of Waldteufel, Chatterbox, Whitney and Whitmark. The music was not until after midnight that the concluding selection was played and then the dancers caught the latest car home. The personal reception committee, which had charge of the ball and looked after the entertainment of the dancers, was: Charles Richards, Robert Gillespie, F. H. Hansen, J. W. Battin and John Buchanan.

City Prisoners Eat Apples. Thirty-six prisoners who spent yesterday in the city jail would not have known that it was Christmas had not Chief Donahue sent them a barrel of large red apples. When dinner was served to the unfortunate, at 2:30 in the afternoon, the menu was lacking turkey, cranberry sauce and other delicacies which make up the traditional Christmas dinner. Pork, beans, bread and coffee were all that the jail chef

PLAY IN THE SIGN LANGUAGE

Students of School for the Deaf Present "Ten Nights in a Barroom."

That favorite of amateur thespians from time almost immemorial, "Ten Nights in a Barroom," was played Christmas night by the students of the Nebraska School for the Deaf in a most creditable manner. Their rendition, which was free from the embarrassing breaks so common in amateur theatrical efforts, showed much careful study and many painstaking rehearsals. It was an all-star performance, too, for there was not one who did not fully respond to the opportunity afforded by the part.

More than 100 visitors and about 150 students were present. The committee upon which the work of making arrangements consisted of L. M. Hunt, Lillian Bamford, A. E. Pope and Edith Rand. The cast of characters: Sample Swelch..... A. E. Pope Simon Sinds..... John Zedlin Frank Morgan..... Lloyd Blankenship Joe Slade..... Charlie Wines Harvey Green..... M. Hunt Mr. Romaine..... Norman Shreve Willie Hammond..... Isaac Wilkes Mrs. Morgan..... Janie Washington Mary Morgan..... Pearl Polson Mablette Carter..... Edith Rand

AMAS CHEER FOR DESERVING POOR.

Salvation Army Distributes Supplies for Eight Hundred People. As a result of nearly three weeks of untiring effort to house-to-house soliciting on the part of the Salvation Army about 500 of the deserving poor of the city enjoyed genuine Christmas dinners yesterday in their own homes. For some time past the Salvation Army has been endeavoring to bring about a Christmas dinner for every family in the city. The plan was to have a "spread" of the past have done and this year he determined that it should be extended not only to the men and larger children, but to the mothers and little children of the families as well, who rarely participate in the big Christmas dinners, and so serve as something besides a material feast. For this reason the uncooked basket dinner was developed and the result was entirely satisfactory. It was accomplished, however, only by careful investigation, and as the deserving families were located they were given written orders to be exchanged at Salvation Army hall, Nineteenth and Hamilton streets, on Christmas morning, for a basket of provisions.

By 8 o'clock the claimants began arriving, but they waited quietly around the big store, or sat watching Ensign and Mrs. Stuart and their assistants as they distributed the provisions among the baskets.

There was a decided majority of women in the gathering, which the ensign accepted as evidence of the success of his plan. The conspicuous absence of children made it all the more noticeable, the fact that in each case had accompanied the women who were being provided with orders sat anxiously, hoping that some unclaimed basket might be given to them. From time to time interested friends looked on to bring greetings or liberal donations of chickens, oranges, bread or money, among whom were Major T. S. Clarkson, Mr. Purley and Dr. Sprague. It was 10 o'clock before the baskets were all packed and ready, 127 of them, arranged upon the postroom, each containing a chicken, potatoes and other vegetables, bread, butter, coffee, sugar, pie and cookies, and plenty of it, for a family of six, excepting in cases where the family was larger, when there was ample provision made for the extra ones. When all was ready Ensign Stuart briefly asked a blessing, which was followed by a few familiar songs, in which the majority joined heartily. An appropriate song by the sweet-faced wife of the ensign concluded the services, after which the people crowded forward to exchange their cards for the baskets. When all had been supplied, including those without orders, twenty baskets were still unclaimed, which were later taken to the homes for which they were intended. In the evening a Christmas entertainment was held for the Salvation Army juniors and some fifty or sixty other children, who came in from the streets of the city. The officers were unable to procure a tree, but there was a general distribution of candy and popcorn, and Ensign Stuart said when all was over that he believed the Salvation Army had accomplished more good among the people yesterday than on any previous Christmas.

PRISONERS GET A GOOD DINNER.

Sheriff Follows Usual Custom of Serving a Liberal Meal. Sixty-eight prisoners in the county jail were not thoroughly sorry they were in there yesterday. Sheriff John Power is not without pride in his exclusive hospitality and he was determined that the Christmas menu should not bring the faintest suspicion of a blot to his reputation as a boniface. The result, which will be remembered by the younger turkey meat on the market and also added to his kitchen stores several bushels of ruby cranberries, enough white celery to fill a hayrack, a keise of delicious sweet elder, a stack of mixed pickles, barrels of apples and oranges, some real cream and some real butter.

DINNER FOR HOMELESS MEN.

Christian Help Mission Furnishes Christmas Dinner for Wanderers. Sixty-nine men, all of them homeless wanderers, ate Christmas dinner yesterday at the Christian Help mission, 1513 Burt street. The guests were treated with quite as much consideration as though they were participants in a dinner at one of the swellest hotels and Christmas cheer was most heartily present. A. S. Baird, the manager of the mission, greeted all of the comers with genuine cordiality and every man was made to feel himself perfectly at home and altogether welcome.

Lodges Have a Good Time.

Myrtle Hall was filled with the members and friends of Union Pacific Lodge No. 17, Ancient Order of United Workmen, who participated in an excellent Christmas entertainment, which comprised instrumental and vocal music, recitations and wending up with a brief social session. The Danish people, to the number of 300 adults and many children, were entertained at Washington hall by Dagmar Rebekah lodge No. 142. A Christmas tree loaded with candles and toys for the little ones was the main feature. Following the exercises dancing was enjoyed and later refreshments were served.

Children Have Merry Christmas.

The children of the Webster street station and Ramoth alley district were given a merry Christmas yesterday morning by Miss Nellie Magee, the city missionary, as Women's Christian Temperance union cottage. Candy oranges, which she had prepared and supplied and two pleasant hours were spent in Christmas games and songs.

CHRISTMAS IN THE CHURCHES

Catholics Observe Day with Solemn Masses and Elaborate Musical Programs.

HIGH PONTIFICAL MASS AT ST. PHILOMENA'S

Flowers and Greenery Convert the Sanctuary into Floral Heaven, Above Which Beams the Star of Bethlehem. At 5 o'clock Christmas morning St. Philomena's cathedral presented a sight infrequently witnessed in Omaha, pontifical high mass being celebrated by Bishop Scannell at that hour. The women of the cathedral parish had on the preceding day converted the sanctuary into a bower of greenery and flowers. The throne was outlined in smilax and holly, while amid the hundreds of candles on the high altar, chrysanthemums, palms and roses added color to a scene at once beautiful and impressive. Above the altar, a single star shone, a figure of the Star of Bethlehem.

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The musical program of this mass was brief but appropriate and was sung by the junior choir. The building was filled to its utmost capacity, chairs being placed in the aisles for the accommodation of those who had come at that early morning hour to be present at the service.

Announcements of the Theaters.

The regular family matinee at the popular Orpheum will be the comedy magnet for the juveniles and the women today. "A Girl of Quality," with her winsome ways and beautiful voice has taken their fancy and together with the abundance of rollicking fun in their skirts and other fine features has made the bill a big popular hit, which is drawing overflowed houses.

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LARGE SOCIAL FUNCTION

Mr. and Mrs. Walter T. Page Entertain for General and Mrs. Lee.

The first of the large social functions to be given for General and Mrs. Lee occurred last evening, when Mr. and Mrs. Walter T. Page received about 300 guests in their home, 2314 Capitol avenue. General and Mrs. Lee, the Misses Lee, Mr. and Mrs. Page and Mr. and Mrs. William Byrd Page of Denver constituted the receiving party, standing in the front parlor, which was effectively decorated in southern smilax, pink roses and holly. The shades were raised, affording a view of the veranda beyond, which had been enclosed and dressed with palms and American flags. Throughout the house there was an elaborate decoration of southern smilax, mistletoe, holly and roses, which varied in color to suit the lighting and other dressing of the various rooms. The dining room was especially pretty in red. The women assisting were: Edith Rand, Barton, Manderson, Fair, Stiger, Barkalow, H. Koutze, Cowgill, Davis, I. Cole, Crofoot, George Palmer, Misses Swensburg, Peck, Kountze, Preston, Buck, Kilpatrick and Smith.

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